

## GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE



IN THE very first story of this book we learned about God—how wise and powerful he is. We learned that God made the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars. We learned, too, that he made the birds, the fish, and the animals; also the beautiful rivers, trees, and flowers.

God is wonderful! He can do anything he wants to do.

We know that this is so because it is what the Bible tells us, and we know that the Bible is true! I am reminding you of all the wonderful things God can do, because this story is about some of the things God has done for his people. It is a true story.

When God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, as we learned in our last story, Moses was afraid he wouldn't be able to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. He was right too; but God was planning to help Moses, and with God's help Moses could do anything God wanted him to do. God was good to Moses. He showed him how great and powerful he was. Moses had a rod in his hand. It was probably a rod he needed when taking care of his father-in-law's

sheep. God told Moses to throw that rod down on the ground, and when he did so the rod became a serpent! Wasn't that wonderful? But Moses was frightened. I think we would have been frightened, too! Moses ran away from the serpent, but God told him to take hold of the serpent's tail, and when he did, it became a rod again in his hand! It was the power of God that turned Moses' rod into a serpent and then back into a rod again, and this was a wonderful lesson to Moses. God told Moses that when he appeared before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to ask the release of the Israelites, the same thing was to be done with the rod and that he would get the same results. This gave Moses courage because it proved that God would help him.

God did some other wonderful things for Moses, also.

Then God spoke to Aaron, Moses' brother, who was living in Egypt with the other Israelites, and told him where he could find his brother Moses. Probably the family thought Moses was dead because they hadn't seen him for forty long years. Aaron was very happy to meet his brother, and Moses told him what God wanted them to do.

God arranged, you see, that Moses and Aaron would work together. Aaron was a very good talker. Even today some people can talk better than others. Sometimes very wise men and women are not able to make speeches. Well, that's the way it was with Moses. He was very wise and humble, and he loved God, and was willing to do anything God wanted him to do, but he wasn't very capable of making speeches. But Aaron was a grand speaker, so they worked together very well.

After Moses and Aaron discussed what the Lord wanted them to do, they decided that the first thing they should do was to meet with the elders of the Israelites. These were Israelites whom the others looked up to as their leaders. It was necessary to explain everything to these elders, so they could let all the Israelites know that God was planning to deliver them from their slavery in Egypt. After they heard of the wonderful way in which God had spoken to Moses and

Aaron, the elders of the Hebrews were very happy, and told all the others about it. And they too, were glad.

Then Moses and Aaron arranged to meet with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. They told him that God wanted the Hebrews to leave Egypt so that they could worship and serve God without the interference of the Egyptians. God knew that Pharaoh was very selfish and very wicked, and that he would not be at all willing to let the Hebrews go. God told Moses that Pharaoh would say, "No!" But there was more than that to it. Pharaoh wanted to know who God was that he should obey him.

Poor Pharaoh!

There are many people in the world who are not acquainted with God, and just like Pharaoh, they laugh at the idea that there can be a God who is so very powerful and able to do anything he wants to do. Don't you feel sorry for them? Well, some day their eyes will be opened just as Pharaoh's were.

When the king asked Moses and Aaron about God, Aaron threw his rod down on the floor and it became a serpent, just as it did before. In Egypt they had magicians and fortune tellers, the same as many of the gypsies are today, and they tried to imitate what God had done. They managed to cause some serpents to wiggle around on the floor, but the serpent God made out of Moses' rod swallowed all the other serpents! Wasn't that strange?

I can imagine that Pharaoh was quite impressed, but still he wasn't willing to let the Hebrews go. Instead of letting them go, he gave orders to the slave drivers that they should make the Hebrews work harder than ever before. This made the Hebrews feel very badly. It made them wish that nothing had been said about their leaving Egypt.

When Moses heard how badly the people felt, he was almost sorry himself. You see, Moses didn't know all that God knew. He didn't know of all the wonderful things God would do to make it hard for the Egyptians until Pharaoh would give his consent for the Hebrews to leave Egypt. Besides, God wanted the Hebrews to realize how

much better it would be for them when they did finally get free from Egyptian bondage. Surely God is wise!

Well, as we would say today, things soon began to happen. Moses and Aaron again asked Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. Of course, as you know, Aaron did the talking, but Moses told him what to say. That was the way God had instructed Moses to do it, and Moses obeyed God and did it that way. But Pharaoh again said, "No!" Then Moses held up his rod over the river, the same river from which the king's daughter had rescued him when he was a baby, and what do you suppose happened? Why, all the water in that great wide river turned into blood! Because of this, the fish in the river died. Not only the water in the river, but the water in the basins and other dishes of the Egyptians turned into blood. Wasn't that awful? Finally there just wasn't any water for the Egyptians to drink, and they dug wells near the river and managed to get a little water in that way. God can do things to make people think when he wants to.

This was certainly a great plague upon Egypt.

After a while it was lifted, yet Pharaoh was not even then willing to give the Hebrews their liberty. He was very bad hearted, and when the plague was lifted he probably thought there wouldn't be any more trouble, and then he became even more hardhearted.

But Pharaoh was mistaken, for there were other plagues to follow. Soon the river was filled with frogs! There were so many of them that they came right onto the land, and even into the houses of the people. The frogs became so thick that they crawled into the dough when the women were making bread! Who would want to eat bread with frogs baked in it?

Now, you can see that this made the Egyptians feel very badly. The Egyptians were heathen people, and they worshiped frogs, but they must have been very angry with them this time. Don't you think so? Then Pharaoh began to think things over. He sent for Moses and Aaron, and agreed to let the Hebrews go if they would rid the country of the frogs. But when the frogs were gone, he changed his mind again.

Then followed the third plague from God. This was a terrible one. The ground in Egypt is very sandy, something like our American desert. Moses stretched out his rod over the ground, and the first thing the Egyptians knew the sand was filled with lice. It must have been almost as though all the sand turned into lice. Can you imagine that? Those nasty lice just crawled around everywhere and onto everything. Life for the Egyptians must have been almost unbearable while the plague of lice lasted.

But when this plague was removed, Pharaoh hardened his heart still more.

And then God brought another plague, which was a plague of flies. The wonderful thing about this plague was that the flies did not cover that part of the country where the Hebrews lived. This seemed to make Pharaoh realize that God was helping the Hebrews, so he sent for Moses and Aaron again, and told them to take the Israelites out of the country, but not to take them very far away. But when God caused the plague of flies to cease, Pharaoh changed his mind again, and would not let the people go.

Then a great plague came upon all the cattle of the Egyptians, causing them to die. This was the fifth plague.

Next the Egyptians broke out with boils.

Then there was a plague of hail.

After that came the eighth plague. The whole land was filled with locusts. What an experience that must have been! These were large insects, probably somewhat larger than our grasshoppers. To have them flying and crawling around everywhere and into everything must have been terrible. And they ate every green thing in sight, so that the land was made bare.

You would think that by this time Pharaoh would have been very glad to let the Hebrews go, but he wasn't. Each time he made Moses think he would let them go, but when the plague was removed he would change his mind, which shows how very wicked he was.

That is a very good way to tell a good man from a wicked man. A good man will always try to keep his promises, but a wicked man

breaks his promises. Pharaoh kept breaking his promises, so each time another plague came upon Egypt from God.

The ninth was a plague of darkness. There was no light in Egypt, not even in the daytime. It was just as dark in the middle of the day as it was in the middle of the night. And it remained this way for three whole days, so that nobody could do anything. But it wasn't that way where the Hebrews lived. This was very easy for God to do, for he makes the darkness as well as the light! You see, it wasn't possible for Moses to bring all these plagues upon Egypt. It was God who helped him to do it.

Pharaoh continued to harden his heart, until finally it became necessary for God to send another plague. This was the tenth and last plague, and what do you suppose it was? Why, the firstborn or oldest child in every Egyptian family died! The firstborn of the cattle also died. Pharaoh's own firstborn son died. That made him think he had better change his mind about letting the Hebrews go, and he did.

He sent for Moses and Aaron again, and told them to lead the Israelites out of Egypt just as quickly as possible. Pharaoh had had enough trouble. He and the Egyptians became afraid that they would all die if they refused longer to let God's people go. So Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron that all the Hebrews could go, and could take their cattle and other belongings with them.

The Egyptians were so eager for them to leave that they gave them all the help possible. They even gave them gold and silver jewelry. That was a wonderful victory for God. It surely must have made Moses and Aaron believe more than ever that God was with them and was helping them. We, too, know that God will help us to do anything he wants us to do!

## **QUESTIONS**

- Who was Aaron, and how did he help Moses do what God asked him to do?

- Did the ruler of Egypt consent to let the Israelites leave Egypt?
- What were the ten plagues, and why were they brought upon the Egyptian people by God?
- How many times did the ruler of Egypt give his consent for the Israelites to leave, and later change his mind?

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***Dawn Bible Students Association***